

BOOK REVIEWS

The history of police deployments, and, later, Canadian Forces (CF) forays northward are well laid out in the book. The criticisms the authors have of these operations are well deserved – namely, they were inadequate in terms of numbers of personnel and equipment, they were ad hoc in nature, and they were temporary in scope. Plans to develop a military force that would maintain a permanent Arctic presence have always died during later budget-cutting exercises – witness, for example, the cancelled Canadian nuclear submarine fleet that was supposed to patrol in the Far North.

The authors argue that the Canadian Government should take a pragmatic approach when dealing with the coming increases in foreseen challenges to its sovereignty in the North. While they offer many ideas for positive action, chief amongst their suggestions are the following: a permanent and effective military presence should be established and maintained in the Arctic; government spending in the North should increase to levels that would truly integrate the Arctic peoples into ‘southern’ Canadian society; a deal should be struck with the Americans over joint supervision and control of the soon-to-be-opened Northwest Passage; and Canadians should be encouraged by every conceivable means to travel, work, and live in the Arctic.

The writers note that “... Canadian nation-building is incomplete, with the provincial and territorial North still outside the Canadian family.”³ In the coming decades, Canada’s armed forces will have to respond to the increased presence of foreign vessels, oil and undersea mining ventures, tour boats, and a host of other unwanted visitors to the Far North.

Arctic Front provides a succinct history of Canada’s presence in the Far North and the challenges to Canadian sovereignty that will be faced in the very near future. The book also offers some practical actions that can be taken to meet this increasing threat. A very useful section on suggested readings is included for those who want to study this subject further. The Canadian military presence is bound to increase in the Arctic in the coming decades, and serving members (and the general public) would be well served by informing themselves of Canada’s history in the region. Reading this book would be a good first step.

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NOTES

1 Ken S. Coates et al, *Arctic Front: Defending Canada in the Far North* (Toronto: Thomas Allen Publishers, 2008), pp.1-2.

2 *Ibid.* p.189.

3 *Ibid.* p.191.

LES PAYS BALTES EN QUÊTE DE SÉCURITÉ

by Matthieu Chillaud

Paris : Economica, 2009

313 pp, € 29

ISBN 978-2-7178-5687-3

Reviewed by Frederic Labarre

Dr. Chillaud’s work is an important contribution to the constructivist tradition of security policy analysis of small states. In addition to being one of the rare works concerned with the comprehensive security of the Baltic States (meaning both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ conceptions of security) in the French language, the subject of the book is extremely relevant to current events – indeed, to the difficulties faced by the countries bordering Russia.

The most refreshing aspect is undoubtedly the constructivist tone given to the argumentation. Even if the author is inspired by the theories of realists such as Robert Jervis to help explain the orientation and formulation of policy in the Baltic States, these policies are so intimately linked to the survival of identity that culture and identity determine interests. This is a central tenet of the constructivist perspective.

From the point of view of a chronicle, this book is a testimony to the skill with which the Baltic States have navigated the perils of regional security policy and the agenda of great powers. As such, it corrects the notion that small states are without recourse in the pursuit of their security and the preservation of their independence.

There are very few shortcomings here, and some cannot be attributed to the author. For example, formatting and typographical mistakes (although few) are clearly the responsibility of the publishing house. Similarly, failure to mention the *Kievenaar Report* – a document addressing the military security of the Baltic States relative to Russia in the late 1990s – cannot be blamed on Chillaud, as this relatively well-known document remains for the initiated only.

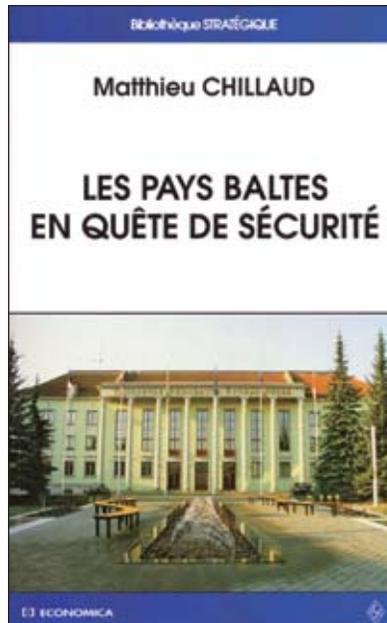
However, the author could have insisted more upon the role played by certain non-military institutions in the promotion and internationalization of Baltic security grievances. The importance of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) and the Voice of America during the period of NATO accession cannot be discounted. As a matter of fact, Paul Goble, one of the more vocal proponents of the Baltic cause, was recently decorated for his efforts as part of the RFE/RL team.

An important section of the work discusses the Russian-speaking minorities, and how the governments of the Baltic

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countries (especially Estonia and Latvia) have ‘bent over backwards’ to accommodate accusations of discrimination. The analysis of how the Baltic States managed to progress on the tightrope of human and political rights without falling into the abyss of ethnic conflict, or becoming victim to the actions of a fifth column, would have added value. Indeed, a deeper discussion of how Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Kozyrev received the Baltic concessions on minority rights through the 1990s would alert the reader unfamiliar with the topic of certain trends in Russian policy-making and strategy. Similarly, these trends should have been connected more precisely with the provision to the Baltic States of the Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the 1999 NATO Summit in Washington, DC. There is merit in recognizing the courage with which the Baltic States have tackled these issues relative to, say, the Balkans, which did not do so.

Finally, the military aspect of the analysis of Baltic security is essential when one considers the issue of security *contributions* versus *consumptions* by the new members is sparsely treated. This is also due to the fact that the



Baltic States, during the period of time under review by Dr. Chillaud, had to generate costly material solutions to their security, relative to the areas needing to be defended and the availability of financial resources. A greater display of the travails of force generation and of the efforts deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan could have been done. The Baltic States have developed, in some cases, original solutions and niche capabilities during the last 15 years. These successes are important to highlight relative to an ‘out-of-area’ policy of NATO.

This important contribution to the literature of the Baltic States is a synthesis that deepens in many respects the analyses available in the specialized media about this region of the world. It enhances our understanding of how intangible concepts, such as identity and culture, can be ‘operationalized’ for the sake of security policy planning and implementation.

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ISLAM AND THE WEST: A CONVERSATION WITH JACQUES DERRIDA

by Mustapha Chérif. Translated by
Teresa Lavender Fagan,
with a foreword by Giovanna Borradori.

Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008

Xxii + 114 pages, US\$19.00

ISBN: 978-0-226-10286-3 (hardcover)

Pages: xxii + 114

Reviewed by Brian Bertosa

Just over three weeks after then-US President George W. Bush announced the end of “major combat operations” in Iraq,¹ a colloquium entitled “Algeria-France: Tribute to the Great Figures of the Dialogue between Civilizations” was held in Paris. Its closing session consisted of a conversation before a packed auditorium between Mustapha Chérif, a prominent Algerian intellectual described as “...one of the only moderate Islamic voices speaking up today,” (p. x), and Jacques Derrida, a towering figure of modern continental philosophy. Their discussion centred upon the relationship, as it appeared to them, between the Islamic world and the West in the context of the events that had recently unfolded, and in the post-9/11 world more generally. Chérif transcribed this interview and published it as *L’Islam et l’Occident* in 2006.² The present volume, compris-

ing the English translation of that work, appeared in October 2008 – over a half-decade since the original colloquium. Nevertheless, virtually nothing in the book has been overtaken by events in the intervening years. At the time of the writing of this review, President Barack Obama is being praised for conciliatory remarks toward Islam³ – although, of course, actions must follow words⁴ – and this takes some of the sting from Derrida’s complaints of US unilateralism. Nevertheless, Western involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan continues.

Islam and the West takes the form of a slim hardback, with an attractive yellow cover and dust jacket, and consists of an elucidating foreword by Giovanna Borradori, who specializes in the philosophy of terrorism; two introductory essays by Chérif, reflecting the structure of the French original, which lacks the foreword; a main body, divided into six chapters of varying length, comprising Chérif’s account of his discussion that day with Derrida; a conclusion; an afterword in the form of a farewell speech given by Chérif after Derrida’s death in 2004; and a chronology of major events in Derrida’s life. Regrettably, the book lacks an index.

Each chapter of the main body consists of one or more questions or discussion points posed at some length by Chérif, followed by Derrida’s views on the subject(s) presented. While fans of Derrida may be more interested in what the great philosopher has to say, I believe that those engaged with the Muslim world – whether as military personnel, diplomatic